

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ROME 002839

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

STATE FOR PRM/P AND IO/EDA
INFO USAID FOR DCHA/FFP LANDIS AND WHELAN

USDA FOR FAS CHAMBLISS
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH/USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [PREF](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: WFP AND FAO EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WORLDWIDE EMERGENCY
ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Ref: Rome 2298

1. Summary. The recent G8 summit at Sea Island, Georgia, ended with a pledge by G8 leaders that their governments would coordinate with FAO and WFP to improve worldwide emergency assessment and response systems. FAO and WFP continue to work with stakeholders to improve emergency needs assessments and response systems despite funding uncertainties. End summary.

----- --
G8 Statement on Improving Emergency Assessments
----- --

2. On June 10, the last day of the G8 summit at Sea Island, Georgia, G8 leaders agreed to expand efforts to fight famine, hunger and food insecurity, including efforts by FAO and WFP to improve worldwide emergency assessment and response systems, the USG news service reported. The G8's official statement included the following:

Acting individually and collectively, G8 members will take the following actions:

-- Continue to work closely with the WFP and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to improve global food emergency assessment methodologies and response systems. G8 countries will support the piloting of the improved assessment process in two Southern African countries this year.

-- Support the International Food Policy and Research Institute's "Strategic Analysis Knowledge Support System" for agriculture and market analysis.

-- Support improvement of international needs assessment initiatives such as the WFP/FAO common approach and the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) Initiative.

-- We will work to ensure that the outcome of the renegotiation of the Food Aid Convention promotes good food aid practices and improved assessments based on the needs of beneficiaries in food insecure countries.

----- --
FAO and WFP Efforts to Improve Emergency Assessments
----- --

3. The latest round of a series of stakeholder meetings sponsored by FAO and WFP took place in Rome from June 6 through 8, 2004. Technical consultations were held to recap milestones previously identified, crosscheck progress made regarding methodological and process issues, discuss key features of recent FAO/WFP crop and food supply assessments, and critique WFP's Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook.

4. The first two days of meetings began with the Second Joint Technical Meeting and Ongoing Review Process of the Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAMs) sponsored by FAO. The meetings were well attended by representatives from FAO, WFP, the European Commission (EC) including ECHO, DFID, Germany, and the US, represented by USAID/FFP Officers, Drs. Will Whelan and Patrick Diskin, along with USUN Rome Program Specialist, Philip Lamade. Day one included a review of background issues, process documents and recent CFSAMs.

5. Some interlocutors expressed concern about the reliability of CFSAM data, e.g., for Malawi, and others said that reports might be more credible with more detailed analyses and explanations about the conclusions.

16. Day two included the presentation of a regional cross border study in southern Africa, which was followed by a demonstration of the EC-funded Global Information and Early Warning Service (GIEWS) workstation, i.e., a Rome-based function which includes reports, database services, mailing lists and software.

17. Day three consisted of discussions about WFP's draft Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) Handbook and a

few words about appropriate ways to finance assessments. To prepare for the meeting, WFP had earlier solicited and in turn received extensive comments on the Handbook from the European Commission and USAID/FFP. In addition, WFP released a paper entitled "WFP Emergency Needs Assessments: Commitment to Transparency."

18. With respect to financing EFSAs, WFP's Associate Director of Operations observed that in view of perceived conflicts of interest by some parties, an independent fund for EFSAs might be preferable to the current practice of using project funds for them. An FAO representative concurred, stressing the importance of preserving the integrity of EFSA findings. He also alerted the audience to FAO's Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA) Guidelines, which focus more broadly than WFP's on agricultural livelihoods, and he also touted FAO's neutrality vis--vis food aid.

Funding Uncertainties

19. Both FAO and WFP face funding uncertainties, although they are distinctly different kinds of uncertainties. FAO's funds for emergency needs assessments have been reduced, yet frequency of man-made and natural disasters has increased the need for reliable assessments. In recent years, FAO's GIEWS budget has been about \$3 million/year, plus \$400,000/year funded exclusively by the EC for the GIEWS workstation. About \$2 million pays for a staff of about 22 people, and the remaining \$1 million pays for publications, translation services, and CFSAMs. In March 2004, the GIEWS budget for 2004 and 2005 was reduced by 12.5%. In order to retain expertise and capacity, FAO has decided to maintain its current staffing levels and instead reduce expenses for CFSAMs. Budget reductions have led FAO to eliminate planned CFSAMs this year for Eritrea, Haiti, and the Sahel. CFSAMs for Afghanistan and Angola are only possible due to ad hoc provisioning of extra-budgetary funding.

110. Per reftel, FAO established a new, extra-budgetary special fund for emergency and rehabilitation in order to fund the establishment of an ENA capability focused on preserving livelihoods. The special fund is an outgrowth of FAO's Program Committee Report, "Progress Report on the Implementation of Recommendations Regarding the Thematic Evaluation of Strategy A.3," released in July 2003. Per FAO, assessments responding to as many as 20 protracted crises covered by CAPs, including analyses, report writing, and project dissemination, will require up to \$1.2 million in funding. Similarly, in October 2004, FAO/GIEWS will propose the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund to finance CFSAMs, to which the EC is expected to contribute \$300,000.

111. As discussed in Paragraph 8 above, WFP's funding uncertainties do not pertain to funding insufficiencies, but to the source of the funds potentially coloring the integrity of the assessments. WFP spends approximately \$3 million/year to perform about 200 assessments of all types e.g., CFSAMs, Joint Assessment Missions (with UNHCR), and ENAs, mostly from project funds. In order to reinforce the integrity of its assessment findings, WFP is considering the establishment of an independent, multilateral fund for its assessment function much like the multi-donor trust fund contemplated by FAO to finance CFSAMs.

112. Recent G8 statements supporting improvements in needs assessment initiatives provide an additional incentive to ensure FAO and WFP maintain and improve their capabilities in this area amid funding uncertainties. USUN Rome and USAID/FFP continue to support FAO and WFP efforts in this regard and are monitoring developments closely. Hall